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The Down-Grading of Richard Nixon Is Softly But Surely Underway

From "Delighted" to "Perfectably Acceptable"

Eisenhower is standing firm on the proposition that any American boy has a right to be Vice President. This in itself is a triumph for Stassen and a mark-down for Nixon. The President's gift for ambiguity and taste for caution are such that some newspapermen left his press conference last week honestly believing he preferred Nixon and others convinced to the contrary. I am in the latter category. A few weeks ago Eisenhower was "delighted" that Nixon would run again; now he is "perfectly acceptable." Stassen instead of being fired for daring to suggest that Nixon be dumped is to get four weeks off to devote himself entirely to that enterprise.

My belief, shared by some experienced correspondents here on the other side of the fence, is that Eisenhower would like to shake Nixon off the ticket but hasn't the nerve to act openly, and that Stassen has probably started too late. Nevertheless there has been a complete reversal of opinion about the convention since the Stassen statement on Nixon and the Kefauver withdrawal in favor of Stevenson.

A few weeks ago there were rooms still available in San Francisco; most newspapermen figured the only story would be in Chicago. Now it is felt that Stevenson may sew up the nomination quickly but that a fight is not impossible in San Francisco. Stevenson's chances are being steadily rated upward, not only for the nomination but the election, though Truman prefers the cold warrior Harriman and the party bosses would like a millionaire candidate who could be depended on to foot his own deficit.

The President did not look too hale and hearty last week; he is not a well man; surprises, unpleasant ones, are possible before November.

No Pat Answer for That Crisis Over Suez

A journalist is expected to be omniscient, but I am compelled to confess that I have no pat explanations or solutions to offer in the Suez crisis. I could not help but admire Nasser for his resourcefulness and daring in pulling a new rabbit out of his hat just when it looked as if we had called his bluff. I am inclined to think this is one of those situations which could be met either by the ruthless application of force to reoccupy the Suez canal zone or by magnanimous action, but neither is likely. Anything in between will be a victory for Nasser, a humiliation for the West, an increase in his stature as a Pan-Arab leader. This spells trouble.

In perspective, the picture calls for a Spengler. This is part of the steady ebb of European power from the Arab lands of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The West has too much social conscience and guilt complex, while Britain and France have been too impoverished by war, to hold on by force. At the same time there is not enough social conscience and vision to launch on the kind of politically big-minded and economically adequate program which might—but only *might*—bind the ex-colonies to the mother countries in common inter-racial partnership. A big moment is thus being met with divided mind and in response to petty interests.

There were many hostile undercurrents here in Washington to the Aswan dam project. Congress is tired of giving money to foreigners; the Southerners saw no logic in a project which would enable Egypt to grow more cotton when our own acreage is being steadily cut back; the whole scheme smacked too much of Henry Wallace's "TVA's on the Danube" (why fight public power at Hell's Canyon and support it at Aswan?); there is, of course, strong opposition to more aid for "neutralist" countries and there was a really offensive atmosphere of blackmail and bazaar bargaining in the way Nasser played East against West while carrying on the most irresponsible kind of radio propaganda against Britain and France. The line of least resistance and greatest popularity for Dulles was to drop the Aswan project. That an anti-Egyptian action might also please Jewish and Zionist opinion on the eve of the election was of little weight in his calculations; he is basically anti-Israel and Eisenhower has the typical Pentagon attitude of hostility toward Zionism as a disturbing factor in the Middle East.

From the standpoint of Israel, to help Egypt and its people to a better life would be in Israel's long range interests, too. A wise Anglo-American statesmanship might have linked such projects as Aswan with peace in the Middle East. These same powers did not lift a finger to enforce international obligations when Nasser barred Israel-bound vessels from the Canal. They sold arms to Nasser even while he was attacking British and American interests. Their sensitive point seems to be fear that Nasser will use control of the Canal to push up oil tanker rates, which seem indeed to be disproportionately low when measured against Panama rates and the cost of the trip around the Cape. Above all the oil interests fear the contagion of nationalization.

The Russians at the moment seem to be behaving with restraint, though it remains to be seen what happens when Nasser visits Moscow. The Soviets would seem to have a greater interest in pursuing the creation of a new entente with England than in challenging the West by bringing Egypt within their sphere of influence. Perhaps the uproar over the Suez, if

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That Collision In A Greater Fog From Which We Avert Our Eyes

Two liners collided in the fog off Nantucket last week, and the disaster became dinner table talk overnight in every home in America. The same night a Congressional subcommittee after months of hearings released a preview of what will be the greatest disaster in history, a Third, nuclear and therefore final, World War, and most papers did not carry a line about it.

The subcommittee report, "Civil Defense for National Survival," had a message of hope as well as terror. It concluded from expert studies that a real civil defense program was feasible. In the words of one scientist it might "mean a difference of 60 million casualties or more in the event of an all-out war." Sixty million is a lot of people, but no one paid attention.

Was it the Swedish or the Italian Captain who was to blame? Or just the fog, the sea and chance? This was debated everywhere. But we instinctively avert our eyes from this greater fog that veils the next war, a fog in which every thoughtful human being bears a steersman's responsibility. It is as if we turn with comfort to the ancient and familiar terrors of the sea.

The Huckster Gets The Hearing

Somehow the report came out as if to insure a minimum of attention. The subcommittee was under the chairmanship of Chet Holifield, a Democrat, of California, a member from the beginning of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy. Holifield is one of the best informed men in Congress on nuclear problems. His subcommittee worked hard. It heard 212 witnesses. It made a report of almost 100 pages.

But it was not released until the day before Congress adjourned. The press galleries, overworked in the adjournment rush, only had one day's advance notice.

The *New York Times* barely mentioned the report and buried Holifield's speech in presenting it. His remarks show why the Administration was so anxious to muffle his findings. Holifield accused Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Strauss of "huckstering." He ridiculed Strauss's widely publicized intimation that "humanitarian" nuclear bombardment without widespread fallout was now possible.

But it was the huckster who got the public ear, the false tidings which made the headlines.

Vested Interests in Ignorance

There are vested interests in preventing a full public awakening to the urgent necessity of a search for peace and coexistence. There are interests in choking off full discussion of the civil defense possibilities. The most important is the military. "Their annual appeals to Congress for huge sums of money would be less effective," the Holifield subcommittee report says, "if they emphasized the importance of civil defense."

Why The Public Apathy?

"The subcommittee's own view concerning public apathy is that it is too easily used as an excuse for not doing anything about civil defense. The subcommittee does not believe the American people, fully informed and properly warned, would fail to act for their own protection or to put forth the necessary effort and sacrifice to obtain the protection that can be achieved. To put it bluntly, the highest national authorities must regard the danger as serious, otherwise one should not expect the public to do so." —*Holifield Report*

The Eisenhower Administration has a double interest in playing down the problems of civil defense. It is shifting for budgetary reasons to dependence on nuclear war, and therefore wants to belittle the dangers. It does not want the burden of an effective civil defense program, and has therefore been stressing state and local responsibility. This, as the subcommittee report shows, is a ludicrous anachronism.

One thing the H-bomb is sure to violate is States Rights. Yet the Civil Defense Act, as the subcommittee report reminds us, vests responsibility for civil defense "primarily in the several States and their political subdivisions." When deadly fallout may make half the country temporarily unlivable, how are local or State authorities going to cope with the emergency?

"Just A Larger Emergency"

Admiral Radford, in his testimony before the subcommittee, said a nuclear attack on the United States would be "just a larger emergency." How large does an emergency have to be before it is a total disaster? How do the armed forces expect to go on operating when the whole supply line of fuel, food and ammunition may be crippled overnight?

Civil Defense Administrator Val Peterson, in his testimony, foresaw "vast elements of the military that won't be able to go anywhere the morning after the attack. . . ."

This is what the subcommittee means when it says that the military decline to recognize that nuclear war "demands drastic changes in strategy and tactics." Civil defense in this perspective becomes military preparedness; without it the military machine would quickly stall in giant helplessness for lack of supply. In addition, civil defense becomes a deterrent as important as a capacity for retaliation. To know that a country is equipped to carry on despite atomic attack is as important as to know that it can strike back.

But is an effective civil defense possible? Surprisingly enough, the subcommittee marshals impressive scientific evidence to show that it is. We will summarize this next week.

The H-Bomb Humanized? Or Just Having Its Face Lifted by Madison Avenue?

"By eliminating the weapon's most repugnant element, the multimegaton fusion bomb has thus been 'humanized'. . . ."

—*"H-Bomb Improved by Fall-out Curb," story by William L. Laurence, on latest statement by AEC Chairman Strauss, p. 19, New York Times, July 29.*

"Possibly the world-wide demand for cessation of H-bomb tests and for outlawing atomic bombs in war may have prompted Mr. Strauss to issue his reassuring statements. . . . Just how is the danger from a nuclear explosion minimized or localized? Mr. Strauss did not explain. . . . Scientists do not know how the deadliness of a nuclear explosion can be minimized."

—*Waldemar Kaempffert's column "Science in Review," p. 9, Editorial section, same day's New York Times.*

"I am concerned over the repeated pattern of applying advertising agency techniques to alleviate the natural fears of hydrogen destruction. . . . An atom or hydrogen bomb burst . . . without dangerous radioactive fallout would be a miracle. Such a miracle has not been achieved."

—*Rep. Holifield, speech in the House, July 26.*

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As *Variety* Would Say, the House Committee Lays an Egg (Several of Them)

Nobody seems to have noticed in the adjournment rush that the House Un-American Activities Committee beat a retreat on its effort to grab passports. . . . Both Dr. Clark Foreman and Dr. Otto Nathan refused to hand over their passports on demand; the former wasn't cited at all, and the Committee did not ask that Dr. Nathan be cited for refusing to hand over his passport. . . . The Committee was bluffing and when defied was afraid to risk a court test. . . . The Committee also backed down on its threat to cite Paul Robeson for contempt. . . As we pointed out at the time, being contemptuous of the Committee —as he was—does not constitute the legal crime of contempt.

In Philadelphia, the House Committee hearings boomeranged. . . . Gale Sondergaard played to packed houses in "Anastasia" thanks to the Committee and the American Legion (which couldn't muster the picket line it threatened). . . . The ovations given her had the kind of political flavor we used to read about in the Third Reich, when the only way people could demonstrate against the regime was to cheer such plays as Schiller's William Tell and its invocation of the fight for freedom. . . . One way to demonstrate in this country is to support every play whose producers have the courage to give parts to hounded artists like Miss Sondergaard and Jack Gilford (Diary of Anne Frank). . . .

Another result of the Philadelphia hearings is that nine distinguished Philadelphia Quakers, including Clarence E. Pickett, sent a "Dear Friend" letter backing Plymouth Meeting to every member of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. . . . The letter makes the point that the decision to retain Mrs. Mary Knowles as librarian (despite her heretical past connection with the Samuel Adams School in Boston) was endorsed by the Civil Liberties Committee of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and that the report of the Civil Liberties Committee was later approved by the Meeting itself. . . . "In a real sense, therefore," the letter says, "any implied reflection upon the action of Plymouth Meeting on this matter is a reflection on our whole Religious Society in Philadelphia." . . .

The letter goes on to say that "it is a matter of sorrow to us that division in a religious group should be the subject of investigation by civil authority" and declares that it regards such *inquiries "as a serious transgression upon the complete division* between church and state, which is one of the important foundations of our democracy." The letter also says the signers find it hard to believe the Committee seriously thinks "an effort to express Christian belief by giving Mrs. Mary Knowles employment should be abandoned because of outside protest. Is the conscience of the church to be subject to the organized pressure of groups of people who differ from it?" . . .

Both Walter Bills Killed

Both the Walter bill on passports and the Walter bill to reverse Cole v. Young and subject all government employes to summary discharge on "security" grounds failed to pass at the last session of Congress. The Senate Postoffice and Civil Service Committee report, like that of the New York Bar Association, helped block the Walter bill on government employes, but the Hennings committee—which had studied the subject—deserves criticism for failing to say a word on the subject.

Memo to B'nai Brith Members

Compare your organization's official attitude with that of the Friends: " . . . it is suggested that one who does not cooperate with a Congressional committee," the Library Committee of Plymouth meeting wrote, "should be penalized by exclusion from employment in his chosen field. But, when silence is the exercise of a constitutional right, to penalize that silence would jeopardize that constitutional right. We think it impossible, in the name of the defense of democracy, to penalize in any way the exercise of rights guaranteed by our Constitution. Such rights, however unpopular, must be available without penalty to all, or they will mean nothing to any of us." Why can't B'nai Brith take the same position instead of declining to help anyone who takes the Fifth or declines to "cooperate"? We'd like to hear from rank and file members on this.

A Defeat for Adenauer-Dulles and A Nazi Cartel Which Grew Fat on Slave Labor

It is a pleasure to record the failure of the I. G. Farben lobby to push through Congress S. 4205 for return of General Aniline & Film. The bill, to return all seized German and Japanese assets, was reported by the Senate Judiciary Committee, and its passage was a prime concern of Chancellor Adenauer when he was here.

Interestingly enough, little effort was made to push through S. 2277, which provides for the return of seized property worth less than $10,000. This would taken care of legitimate German and Japanese claims but its passage would have deprived I. G. Farben's lobbyists of a sentimental appeal for "the little fellow."

Failure of S. 4205 to pass was also a defeat for Secretary Dulles, whose old firm Sullivan & Cromwell has represented many of the big German cartels. Though his plea for return of I. G. Farben's property was based on an appeal to respect international agreements, he cynically waved aside American obligation under the 1946 Paris reparations agreement not to make such restitutions.

Dulles's argument was that this was an "executive agreement . . . without authority whatever to bind the Congress," that it was "not intended to operate in perpetuity" but was "designed as a temporary measure perhaps to assure against a revival of German militarism and the use of German important commercial assets possibly as an instrument of German militarism. I think that that danger has passed. . . ." That is one for the history books.

General Aniline & Film, already purchased once from the German American who claimed to own it, was used by Germany to cripple American production of synthetic rubber and other basic war materials. Its patent agreements were an instrument of economic warfare, the other half of the giant squeeze put into operation when the Japanese overran the natural rubber areas of Malaya and Southeast Asia. FDR was determined that it should never go back to German hands.

I. G. Farben, the German parent trust, was one of the chief beneficiaries of Nazi slave labor and of those "experiments" in the crematoria. We are ashamed to report that Jewish lawyers here in Washington, a Jewish public relations firm, and ex-New Dealers took part in the lobby. So soon do we forget.

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wisely handled, might yet lead to an all-round stabilization in the area. At the moment there is entirely too much hysteria; the Suez company only had 12 more years of life anyway; Nasser has been physically in control of the Canal since the British left at Dulles's urging; he cannot abuse his power without endangering all his projects including Aswan. The situation is far from being the disaster the headlines picture it, unless Mr. Dulles makes some more blunders. So far, in the Middle East, he has made nothing but blunders ever since he tried to isolate Nasser and punish his neutralism by organizing the Bagdad Pact.

The Jury Sent to The Nearest Library for the *Corpus Delicti*

The jury in New York's third Smith Act trial went out at 12:30 p.m. last Monday. "Shortly before 3 p.m." according to an account next morning in the New York *Daily News*, "the jury sent for copies of Karl Marx's works." What the jury discovered in them may have clinched the case because after only ten hours of deliberation it found all six defendants guilty.

In criminal cases the jury often asks to see the scene of the crime, or the blunt instrument with which it was committed, or perhaps to read again that portion of the testimony in which the accused wavered when asked where he was on the fatal night. But here is a criminal prosecution in which the jury, in trying to reach a verdict, sends out for some books written a century ago.

Marx's works would not have been needed if any of the defendants had been arrested for mounting a soapbox in Union Square and calling on his listeners to overthrow the government, or if any of them had written an article to that effect in the *Daily Worker*. A witness to the speech, a photostat of the article, would have been enough to prove them guilty of advocating overthrow. In the absence of such testimony, the government had to put the works of Marx in evidence in order to infer from these works that the defendants as self-confessed Marxists *must* be getting ready, i.e. "conspiring," some day to advocate what their master advocated. In this sense books were on trial. Men were being tried for their ideas; not for crimes they had committed but for beliefs they were suspected of holding.

Even Twelve Tried and True Ph.D's . . .

Trials of this kind are complex ideological disputations. They strain the jury system. Any jury can judge a murder, a theft, a lovers' quarrel, an assault. But when a jury sends out for Marx, it is sending for abstruse and difficult works over whose meaning learned men dispute. The literature of Marxist exegesis is as enormous as that of Christianity. Two world movements—Socialist and Communist—are as bitterly divided as Protestants and Catholics over what their master really advocated. Here the question is submitted to an ordinary jury of average citizens for decision in a few days or hours. We can see that jury leafing through the *Manifesto*, or trying to puzzle out the *Critique of Political Economy*, or dipping in bewilderment into the three volumes of *Das Kapital*. Under the law as changed at this past session of Congress men may be sent to jail for as much as 20 years on what a jury decides from such evidence.

Does being a Marxist commit one to revolutionary action, as the Communists have insisted when they were free to speak frankly? Or can a Marxist be a gradualist social reformer and democrat, as the Socialists have argued? Sadly enough, in this instance the jury decided, as it were, in favor of the Communist interpretation. Had this been merely one of those old-fashioned political debates, Communist theoreticians would undoubtedly have attributed the happy outcome to the class composition of the jury. There was only one capitalist on it, a blouse manufacturer. The others were proletarians: three housewives, three salesmen, a milk truck driver, a postal clerk, a locksmith, a machine operator and a bookkeeper. This would be very funny if men were not being sent to jail in considerable part on what such juries decide a German exile really meant by what he wrote a hundred years ago in the England of Queen Victoria. We have slipped a long way from the standards of free society when we take such trials for granted. They occur nowhere else in the Western world. But prosecutions for opinion grind on here, almost unnoticed.

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